



**TOWN OF WADESBORO
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WADESBORO TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM
205 EAST MORGAN STREET, WADESBORO, NC 28170**

Monday

April 7, 2025,

5:00 P.M.

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Fred Davis called the meeting to order at 5pm and presided.

Councilmembers in attendance are as follows: Jo Ann Bennett, Garrett Snuggs, Chipper Long, Lawrence Parsons, Ida Cason (5:04pm) and Town Attorney Aaron Bates.

Department Heads in attendance are as follows: Fire Chief Scott Martain, Finance Officer Maureen Mason, and Lt. Jason Escheat and Public Works Director Hugh James.

Town Attorney Aaron Bates read the public comment policy and public comment statue to all in attendance.

INVOCATION

Pastor Steve Adams

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Garrett Snuggs made a motion and Councilmember Lawrence Parsons seconded the approval of the agenda Motion approved by a vote of 5 for and 0 against.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Chipper Long made a motion and Councilmember Jo Ann Bennett seconded the approval of minutes from March 3, 24, 2025. Motion approved by a vote 5 for 0 against.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following concern citizens came to address councilmembers on the devastation and passing of K9 Bliitz in the line of duty. Citizens called for resignation of Town Manager, City Council Members and Interim Chief Jason Eschert along with involving the SBI. The citizens are as follows: Stephen Green, Donald Sellers, Jerel Miller, Toni Rorie, Kevin Stewart, Josh Harrington Michelle Blair and Erik Van Brero.

Christine Morton and Maureen Lett discussed their concerns on aid involving the towns to help with animal control within the city limits.

John Liles addressed councilmembers on a personal matter about comments on Facebook being made about his daughter along with addressing the animal control issue within the town and that all responsibility should not fall on the town.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Manager Wiley Ross discussed the Interlocal Agreement with Anson County on animal control. Mr. Ross stated that a contract that has been in place since 2017 to provide animal control services for the town and has not been enforced since 2018 with the town making payments with money being owed to the county that will be paid once an invoice has been received.

Councilmember Jo Ann Bennett made a motion and Councilmember Chipper Long seconded to postpone Peoplefest to next year. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 for 0 against.

Town Manager Wiley Ross gave an update on 911 contract with Anson County, which was the town offering to pay for one dispatcher, but county wants the town to pay for two dispatchers with contract ending June 30, 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Garrett Snuggs made a motion and Councilmember Chipper Long seconded the approval for CDBG Project Budget Ordinance. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 for 0 against.

Councilmember Chipper Long made a motion and Councilmember Lawrence Parsons seconded the approval of FY 24-25 Audit Contract and Engagement Letter with JB Watson & Co. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 for 0 against.

Town Manager Wiley Ross discussed with the council updating the town's current website with bids ranging from 15,000 to 25,000. The company that the town would like to use has worked with several municipalities in North Carolina that they service with their bid coming in around 4500.00 with making the website more user friendly. Mr. Ross said that he will send the council a copy of the contract.

Councilmember Chipper Long made a motion and Councilmember Garrett Snuggs second to move forward with spending 4500 to update the town's current website. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 for 0 against.

TOWN STAFF REPORT

FIRE CHIEF SCOTT MARTIN – As of today 9 people have signed up for the WFD Summer Camp. Funding was cut for the camp, and they are actively seeking donations. WFD has received the care to share a grant of 7500 to help residences in case of a hurricane or national disaster.

Councilmember Chipper Long made a motion and Councilmember Lawrence Parsons seconded the approval for the town to supplement the WFD Summer Camp and to actively pursue 3 private grants to seek funding for more rescue equipment. Motion was approved by a vote of 5 for 0 against.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR HUGH JAMES – Gave update on the guard rail on Maple Lane should be put up by the end of April. Splashpad concrete has been poured over the main pad, bathroom renovation has begun. Storm Water AI Grant is progressing along with the Burn Street Pump Station. Mr. James announced to the council that he will be retiring on June 1 with his last day with the Town of Wadesboro being May 29, 2025.

Town Manager Wiley Ross said that Colton Sutton, a citizen, would like to extend the hours of City Pond and will look into extending the hours.

FINANCE OFFICER MAUREEN MASON- Updated councilmembers on the financial highlights for that fund revenue collection is at 53% in comparison to where we are. 66%, that equals \$3.4 million of our budget revenue even though it is low, it is an improvement from last year which was 3 million. Expenditure is 64%, which equals \$4 million in total budget compared to last year at 67% which was \$4.6 million. The current shortfall stands at 653,000, which is a significant improvement from last year's deficit of 1.6 million.

Tax collections have increased by 206,722 dollars compared to the prior fiscal year and that is contributing positively to the overall revenue growth. Water and Sewer fund revenue collections are at 69 % \$2.2 million of our budgeted revenue which aligns with projections. Expenditures for both the water and sewer departments operate under budget at 48% expenditure.

Cash savings and investments stand at nearly \$8 million marking the steady increase from \$2.4 million from the previous year. This growth is attributed to higher interest rates and increased transfers of idol funds from the checking account and into interest bearing investment accounts.

Mrs. Mason also stated that with the animal control contract being mentioned, she has been in contact with the finance officer from the county and as of today, the county finance officer did confirm that there were no invoices that had been sent to the town for 2018- 2019 fiscal year and 2020 through this fiscal year.

INTERIM CHIEF JASON ESCHERT – I've been heartbroken at the loss of K9 Blitz and have been told I wasn't able to speak but I have chosen to risk my job and speak. I've been investigating this matter and yes, I've contacted the FBI, and I contacted the District Attorney in Montgomery County also contacted the Virginia State Police where K9 Biltz originated, and I'll be more than happy to share with you that recording later.

I've learned from Virginia State Police that K9 Biltz had two handlers. K9 Blitz unprovoked attacked both handlers. K9 Blitz also unprovoked attacked the trainer was able to fend it off. K9 Blitz unprovoked attacked a kennel attendant and caused serious injuries, and at that time the Virginia State Police decided to decommission K9 Blitz.

K9 Blitz was given to Mr. Harrington with the understanding that he would only be used to be bred unfortunately, Mr. Harrington elected to give the Wadesboro Police Department a donated dog that Mr. Harrington stated was not a bite apprehension dog and has been confirmed that K9 Biltz was a bite apprehension dog, and he was not trained in narcotics in Virginia.

Interim Chief Eschert also said as much as people want to get up here and say and spew whatever was spewed, facts are facts and facts are what he stands behind. I'm sorry at the loss of that dog and more will come out later that cannot be discussed but if you want to trash me and expect me to keep my mouth shut it's not going to happen. Everything that was said is in the media it's in the press you can't retract words that have been spoken.

TOWN MANAGER WILEY ROSS JR. – Reminder councilmembers that on April 12, 2025, from 8am to 12p. The town along with staff and council members will be going out to clean up the community.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS- Councilmember Lawrence Parsons said that he appreciates that the SBI engages in the K9 Blitz situation.

Councilmember Garrett Snuggs expressed the importance of transparency.

Mayor Davis said that with all the controversy going on, he will take the high road. Mayor Davis also said that he has been attacked, his daughter has been attacked and that he has been watching a miracle with the healing of his daughter.

CLOSED SESSION – Councilmember Garrett Snuggs made a motion and Councilmember Lawrence Parsons seconded to go into closed session to discuss the following - NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. Motion approved by a vote of 4 for 0 against. (Chipper Long left at 6:22pm)

Councilmember Garrett Snuggs made a motion and Councilmember Lawrence Parsons second to come out of closed session. Motion approved by a vote of 4 for 0 against.

ADJOURNMENT – Councilmember Garrett Snuggs made a motion and Councilmember Jo Ann Bennett seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:54pm. Motion approved by a vote 4 for 0 against.

Debbie A. Cox
Clerk to the Council
Town of Wadesboro